Condition and Capacity of Route 12, North Vietnam to Laos

Route 12, which extends about 250 kilometers (km) from Ha Tinh, North Vietnam (N 18°20', E 105°54') through the Mu Gia Pass to Thakhek, Laos (N 17°24', E 104°48'), is for the most part a fair weather road motorable by trucks during the dry season, but subject to serious deterioration during the wet season, May to September or October. Route 12 can be roughly divided into three sections: North Vietnam; the Mu Gia Pass and eastern Laos; and western Laos. The North Vietnam and western Laos sections appear to be in fair to good condition. It is probable that these sections have been improved or at least maintained in useable condition for trucks in the dry season. The central section of route 12, however, is believed to be in fair to poor condition with the worst road conditions in the area of the Mu Gia Pass. This section, which was not motorable by trucks in 1959, has been improved to allow some truck traffic.

The overall capacity of route 12* is about 40 trucks each way per day (EWPD)** in the dry season. The capacity is negligible, however, during the wet season. The North Vietnam section from Ha Tinh to Dai Dinh, approximately 15 km from the North Vietnam-Laos border, is at least a single lane earth road with a capacity of 200 trucks EWPD*** in the dry season and about 25 trucks EWPD**** in the wet season. The Mu Gia Pass-eastern Laos section is probably a fair weather motorable track with a capacity of 40 trucks EWPD+ in the dry season and negligible capacity during the wet season. Route 12 in the western portion of Laos--from approximately 50 to 60 km west of the North Vietnam-Laos border to Thakhek--is a single lane earth road with a capacity of about 190 trucks EWPD++ in the dry season and negligible capacity in the wet season.

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* The characteristics of route 12 were derived from a variety of sources. Based on this information an estimate was made of the number of vehicles that the route could carry each way per day. An average vehicle load of 2.7 metric tons was used to obtain the approximate tonnages that could be moved on this route.

** Approximately 100 tons EWPD.
*** Approximately 550 tons EWPD.
**** Approximately 70 tons EWPD.
\+ Approximately 100 tons EWPD.
++ Approximately 500 tons EWPD.

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